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MEETING CALENDAR

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT went to press, go to www.bostonmpo.org or call (617) 973-7119. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

July 9 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. Conference Room 4. 1:00 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Conference Room 4. 3:00 PM

July 10 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

July 21 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3. 5:00 PM

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MPO Releases Draft UPWP and Draft FFYs 2009-2012 TIP Project List

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is circulating the draft federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review. The UPWP describes transportation-planning work conducted by the MPO, as well as five new planning projects to be con-

ducted in the region in the upcoming fiscal year.

The public-comment period for the UPWP will begin on Monday, July 7, 2008, and end on Tuesday, August 5, 2008. Comments must be received by the MPO at one of the addresses at the end of this article on or before August 5.

The MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee is also making a list of projects for inclusion in the upcoming draft FFYs 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity



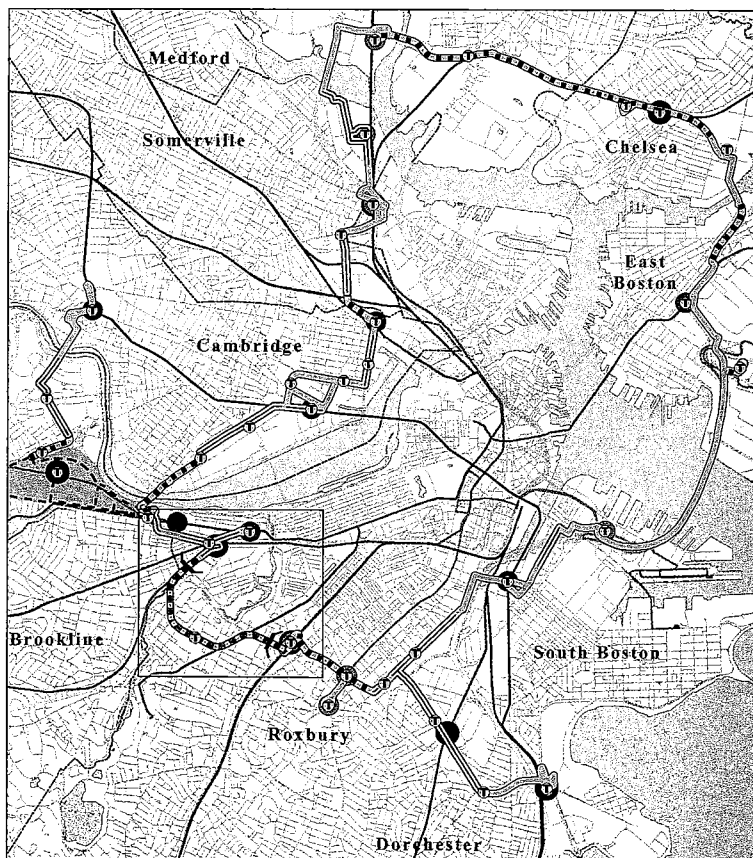
• UPWP/TIP cont. on p. 2

Urban Ring Alignment Proposed

BUS-RAPID-TRANSIT ROUTE AND INTER-MODAL CONNECTIONS RECOMMENDED

The Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOTPW) presented its preliminary recommendations for the alignment of the proposed 25-mile-long Urban Ring at four public meetings held in June in Cambridge, Chelsea, and Boston's Fenway and Roxbury neighborhoods.

The Urban Ring is a proposed bus-rapid-transit (BRT) system that would circumferentially link fast-growing employment centers, residential neighborhoods, and educational and medical institutions in



• Urban Ring cont. on p. 4

The proposed alignment for the Urban Ring corridor as presented by EOTPW

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, Cities of Boston, Newton, Salem, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Funding Available for Human-Services Transit Programs

MPO ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECTS THAT SERVE PEOPLE WITH LOW-INCOMES AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Boston Region MPO is inviting proposals for projects that meet the objectives and requirements of the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program or New Freedom program.

The JARC program provides grants to support the development and maintenance of projects designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and

activities related to employment. The New Freedom program provides grants for new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives (beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) that assist people who have disabilities.

In the Boston Urbanized Area, \$1.2 million in funding is available for the JARC program and \$1.1 million is available for the New Freedom program for this round of funding.

Eligible applicants include private nonprofit organizations, state and local government authorities, and opera-

tors of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

Completed applications are due to the MPO by July 18, 2008, at 4:00 PM.

Background information on the JARC and New Freedom programs, as well as application forms, may be found at the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org. For more information, contact Annette Demchur at annetted@bostonmpo.org or (617) 973-7140.

MBTA Ridership Up as Gas Prices Spike

Record-high fuel prices have motivated drivers in the Boston region to find alternative modes of transportation, including transit. Since the winter of 2007, the national average gas price has risen by over a dollar per gallon. During the period January 2007 through March 2008, MBTA ridership increased by approximately 3.1 million trips per month.

In April 2008 the MBTA reported its highest ridership figures in over a year

State Boosts Funding for Projects that Spur Economic Development

The Patrick Administration has announced changes to the Small Town Road Assistance Program (STRAP) and the Public Works Economic Development (PWED) program, two state programs that fund municipal transportation projects designed to stimulate economic development.

The passage of a state transportation bond bill in April increased the amount of funding for STRAP by \$5 million. The program provides grants of up to \$500,000 for transportation projects that improve economic development and safety in small towns. This

year, more communities are eligible to apply for STRAP grants, since the state raised the population threshold from 3,500 to 7,000.

The state has also revised the PWED grant program, which funds transportation and infrastructure projects in cities and towns. Municipalities seeking PWED funding will see greater emphasis on whether or not their projects support state priorities for achieving sustainable development.

Consideration will be given to whether the proposed projects improve mobility, stimulate development in

• Funding *cont.* on p. 4

Calendar cont. from p. 1

July 23 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM*

July 24 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

July 30 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Open House. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. Two sessions: 12:30 PM or 5:30 PM*

July 31 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

July 10 (Thursday)

MBTA Public Meeting: Update on Progress of Talbot Station Rehabilitation Project. *Talbot Bernard Homes Community Room, 193 Talbot Avenue, Dorchester. 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM*

July 29 (Tuesday)

Boston Region MPO Workshop. *Norfolk Town Hall, Room 124, One Liberty Lane, Norfolk. 5:30 PM*

• UPWP/TIP *cont.* from p. 1

Determination (TIP) available to the public. These materials are not a draft TIP. The public review period for the draft TIP has not yet been established. Please check the MPO website, www.bostonmpo.org, for an announcement of the review period.

The MPO will host a workshop and open house in July to hear the public's views on the programs (see the meeting calendar for details).

The draft UPWP may be obtained after 12:00 noon on July 7 at www.bostonmpo.org or by contacting the

• UPWP/TIP *cont.* on p. 4

Alewife Station Bicycle Cage to Open this Summer

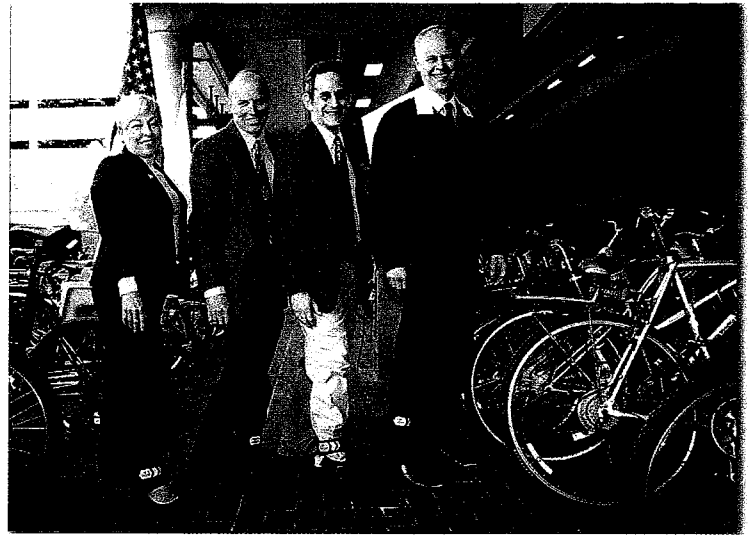
NEW FACILITY TO PROVIDE MORE PARKING SPACES AND SECURITY FOR BICYCLES

The MBTA will install the first secure bicycle cage in the MBTA system at Alewife Station this summer.

Users will be able to access the cage, which will be equipped with a surveillance system, by swiping a free Bike CharlieCard, issued by the MBTA. The addition of the cage will significantly increase bicycle parking capacity at the sta-

tion. Currently, approximately 250 people park their bicycles at Alewife each workday. The new cage will hold close to 200 additional bicycles, according to the MBTA.

This project was developed through a partnership of the MBTA, MassBike, the MBTA's Bike Committee, the LivableStreets Alliance, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. It was funded through the Boston Region MPO.



Daniel A. Grabauskas, MBTA General Manager, David Watson, Executive Director of MassBike, Larry Slotnick, of the LivableStreets Alliance, and Barbara Lucas, of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, promoting bicycle commuting at Alewife Station

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to release for public review the draft federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2009–2012 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP) and draft FFY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); see article on page 1 for more information. The Committee also voted to direct work to begin on the Assembly Square Station Feasibility Study, which will analyze the feasibility of a new Orange Line station in Somerville. The Committee also accepted the MPO's Coordinated Human-Services Transportation Plan and permitted the MPO staff to begin soliciting proposals for projects that could receive funding under FTA's JARC and New Freedom programs; see related article on page 1. Also in June, Barbara Lucas was re-elected vice chair of the Committee. Ms. Lucas represents the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, one of the Boston Region MPO's member agencies.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

In June the Advisory Council heard from Mary Ellen Sullivan, the MPO's UPWP Manager, and Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, about recommendations of the MPO staff for draft versions of those certification documents.

Then Michael Furlong, of MassHighway, and Ed Hollingshead, of Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike, presented the schedule of

work on the I-95/I-93/University Avenue and Dedham Street Interchanges Project to complete a draft and final environmental impact report with 25 percent design by 2010. The project aims to reduce crashes and improve travel in conjunction with the Route 128 Add-a-Lane project, and to restore ecological functions and public access to the adjacent open space.

The project would create new connections to and from the Westwood Station development, and construct 12 acres of wetlands and thou-

sands of feet of pedestrian trails.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the June meeting, MBTA Transit Police Sergeant John Cantella discussed the MBTA's activities related to assisting riders who have disabilities, and the MBTA's activities for keeping passengers and property safe and secure. If you experience any difficulties, you may phone his office at (617) 222-1200.

The MBTA's Office for Transportation Access (OTA)

announced that the THE RIDE continues to break records for number of passengers served. In May, the paratransit service provided 163,463 rides to customers.

AACT is planning a gala affair to celebrate the organization's 30-year anniversary. The event will take place the evening of Thursday, October 16, at the Holiday Inn in Brookline. Those interested in attending should contact AACT Coordinator Janie Guion at (617) 973-7507.

Bus Rapid Transit Plans Move Forward

• Urban Ring *cont. from p. 1*

Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Medford, and Somerville by providing direct transit connections between points on the MBTAs existing radial transit system.

EOTPW developed its preferred alignment following a year-and-a-half-long alternatives analysis process, which included both a thorough technical evaluation and broad-based public involvement with the project's Citizens Advisory Committee, neighborhood and advocacy groups, the general public, and other stakeholders. The alignment, known as the Locally Preferred Alternative, includes a dedicated busway for more than half of the corridor, intermodal connections at rapid transit, com-

muter rail, and bus stations, a tunnel under the Longwood Medical Area, one spur to Allston and Harvard Square, and one spur to the JFK/UMass Red Line station. EOTPW expects this alternative to cost \$2.2 billion. The state will pursue funding from the federal New Starts Program.

EOTPW and its consultants will be developing a revised draft environmental impact report/draft environmental impact statement by November 30, 2008. This document will be available for public review and comment and will be followed by a public hearing on the project.

For more information, visit the project website at www.theurbanring.com.

Review Begins

• UPWP/TIP *cont. from p. 2*

Boston Region MPO staff: by mail at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston 02116-3968; by voice at (617) 973-7100; by TTY at (617) 973-7089; by fax at (617) 973-8855; or by e-mail at publicinformation@ctps.org. Copies will be available in CD, print, or accessible formats.

For more information about the UPWP, contact Mary Ellen Sullivan at mesullivan@bostonmpo.org or (617) 973-7119. For more information about the TIP, contact Hayes Morrison at hayesm@bostonmpo.org or (617) 973-7129.

State Funding

• Funding *cont. from p. 2*

community centers or brownfields, support transit-oriented development, and conserve energy and resources.

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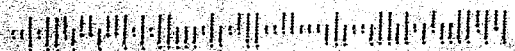
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GRAPHICS & PHOTOGRAPHY

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